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[775] 587 Heaven in concrete terms and believed that husbands and wives would be reunited there. Things would work out quite well mathematically if a widow and widower remarried each other, since in Heaven each mate would go to the first spouse, thus avoiding the unheavenly complication of a second mate left alone for eternity. For a second wife, they listened to the recommendations of neighbors far more than they did when marrying the first time. This was borne out by the testimony of a woman I found picking berries from a bush that overhung a garden wall. While speaking to me she kept a watchful eye turned toward the near-by house in fear that someone would tell her to leave the berries alone. "How did you happen to marry Nikola?" I asked her. Like the other women she seemed to welcome a chance to talk about herself.

"For three years I was a widow in Simeonovo before somebody recommended me to my present husband, at that time a widower living here in Dragalevtsy. One day he came over to Simeonovo, looked me up, and asked me to marry him. I accepted right away although I had never heard of him before. Winter was coming on and I didn't have any money to buy food for myself and my little boy. I went immediately home with him and lived with him as his wife for two months before we were married."

Her second husband was one of the poorest men in the village, and her life was decidedly unhappy; yet to the village way of thinking, she was better off than as a widow.

593 Most of these second marriages turned out successfully provided the question of stepchildren could be satisfactorily settled. Sometimes fathers sent away their own children to a relative and gladly took in those of the second wife. Quite often the children of both the husband and wife were brought up together as one family. A second wife was generally anxious to have children by her second husband in order to ensure her place in his affections, especially if she had children by her first husband who ate up the food and wore the clothes provided by their stepfather.

587 ● 837 Widows and widowers were permitted by public opinion to live together as though they were married for awhile before the actual ceremony took place. This above all else emphasized the fact that

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second marriages were entered into because of convenience and necessity. But such tolerance was not shown to the previously unmarried. 587 837

In Dragalevtsy children married according to age, the oldest first. If a younger child wanted to marry before his brother, he had to buy permission, but in no case was a son or daughter supposed to have the customary wedding celebration before an older sister married, the only chance being an elopement followed by a very simple ceremony. 582

Most girls and men in Dragalevtsy married between the twentieth and the twenty-fifth year. At the time of the last census (1934) there were only one married man and eighteen married women under twenty. Men had begun to marry later than they had ten years before, although there seemed to be no such well-defined trend for the women.

Since marriage was the normal channel for sex expression, an enamored couple thought readily of a wedding. When they reached an understanding, they considered themselves engaged and sought parental approval. Of the thirty representative families that I studied, eighteen, or more than half, were engaged one week. Only two couples were engaged for longer than two weeks. 584

The engagement did not grant the couple any privileges of intimacy; indeed, the boy was not allowed to visit with the girl until the wedding. His sisters and relatives went to call upon her, or, if she had been stolen and was in his home, his parents kept the girl away from him until the day of the wedding. Therefore, the engagement period did not give the young couple any chance of getting better acquainted; it simply gave the families an opportunity to prepare for the wedding a week later. Whenever a wedding was to take place, someone usually sent a message to me at the College, and if possible I attended. As a foreigner I was attracted to those customs that were bizarre; so to offset this I persuaded three peasants of different ages and from different families to give me separately a complete description of the typical wedding. This showed me which points they thought most important and served as a check to my observations.

A wedding was a village affair, the parents of the girl inviting all of those who had previously invited them as well as those whose invitations they would like to receive. This meant the laying in of large 585